

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 5 and 8-9 were amended. Claims 1-12 are pending in this application.

PRIORITY

The Examiner alleges that the specification fails to provide support for the phrase "award server," used in various claims, and, due to that, this patent application is therefore not entitled to any priority claim.

Applicant respectfully traverses. However, in the interests of expediting the prosecution of this application, Applicant has amended the various instances of "award server" to --bonus apparatus-- which is used in the specification extensively. Due to this, Applicant respectfully submits that any questions about the priority claim have been satisfied. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner to consider the priority date of this application to be that of the original filing, for which priority has been claimed. Specifically, the priority date is October 2, 1992 – the filing date of U.S. Patent No. 5,292,127.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

Claim 1 was objected to due to a clerical spelling error. The word sufficient was spelled "suffcient" and has been corrected via the preceding amendment.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Kelly (U.S. Patent No. 5,816,918) – the "918" reference. Applicant respectfully traverses. The '918 reference's earliest priority date is April 5, 1996, while the present application has an effective filing date of October 2, 1992. Therefore, Kelly is not prior art to the present application and withdrawal of the claim rejections is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Applicant believes that all pending claims are patentable, and respectfully requests an early Notice of Allowance. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,

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